



2016/0125(COD)

27.9.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Legal Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Ukraine) (COM(2016)0236 – C8-0150/2016 – 2016/0125(COD))

Rapporteur: Heidi Hautala

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Legal Affairs Committee has been closely monitoring the developments in Ukraine over the last year, in particular in the fields of reform of the judiciary and the public administration and the considerable legislative activity, including amendments to the constitution and harmonising legislation to EU law, which has taken place during this period.

A delegation of members from the Committee visited Kiev in September 2015 to examine how Parliament could assist the local judicial authorities - and businesses and citizens - to create better links and relations on these questions. This was followed up in June 2016 by the organisation in Brussels of a public hearing, in cooperation with the Commission, the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM Ukraine) and the Council of Europe, with the participation of public and private Ukrainian stakeholders active in these fields.

The Commission has recognised in its last two progress reports significant headway by Ukraine in implementing the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP). This momentum needs to be capitalised upon by granting the visa free regime, but mechanisms must be in place in order to effectively monitor the progress in implementing the Association Agreement, in particular when it comes to reforming the judiciary and the public administration.

The Legal Affairs Committee is very happy to note the significant progress made, as manifested in the Commission progress reports and as seen and heard by Committee Members themselves during the above-mentioned delegation visit and public hearing. It should however be underlined that the concrete results of the progress achieved must not just be upheld but also continued to be built upon in order to streamline the rule of law in all aspects of Ukrainian society, not least in order to ensure that the decision to grant visa liberalisation and possible future similar EU action in Ukraine will contribute to further the rapprochement towards EU law and European legal traditions.

The Committee on Legal Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament adopts its position at first reading taking over the Commission proposal.

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Title	Listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement (Ukraine)
References	COM(2016)0236 – C8-0150/2016 – 2016/0125(COD)
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	LIBE 28.4.2016
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	JURI 28.4.2016
Rapporteur Date appointed	Heidi Hautala 11.7.2016
Discussed in committee	5.9.2016
Date adopted	26.9.2016
Result of final vote	+: 19 –: 3 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Joëlle Bergeron, Marie-Christine Boutonnet, Jean-Marie Cavada, Kostas Chrysogonos, Mady Delvaux, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Sajjad Karim, Dietmar Köster, Gilles Lebreton, António Marinho e Pinto, Emil Radev, Evelyn Regner, József Szájer, Axel Voss, Tadeusz Zwiefka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Buda, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Pascal Durand, Angel Dzhambazki, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, Stefano Maullu, Virginie Rozière